3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Murngin OII7

along the bottom of the lagoon. Panel *b* deals with the time when the wet-season floods submerged a hive of wild bees near the totemic place of the tortoise. Many of the bees were drowned and both they and the honey floated on the surface of the water. The dots represent the drowned bees, and the diamonds the honey from the submerged hive. The patterns on panels *c* and *d* are the leaves of the spike-rush, *norik* or *rakia*.

The parallel white lines on *e* symbolize the fish trap constructed by *Laitjun*,[40] a type of trap still employed to capture a fresh-water fish called *paipinja*.

(3) Fish

The Shark, Mana, at Blue Mud Bay

When the *dua* shark, *Mana* (tiger shark, *Galeocerdo* sp.) was a man he tried to establish a camp at Arnhem Bay, but was speared by *Borolo-borolo*[41] because the latter did not want any strangers near him. *Mana* ran across country to Blue Mud Bay, transformed himself into a tiger shark and tried to live in a fresh-water swamp. But it was far too shallow for his comfort, so he travelled to the sea coast, where he met an old man tiger shark with whom he has lived ever since.

Mana's body is now a large white-barked eucalyptus tree in the swamp where he first tried to live. *Mana* the shark continues to live in the sea. This apparent contradiction is not unusual, p. 33. A carved figure, Pl. 132A, illustrates this myth.

Plate 119B pictures the totemic swamp of *Mana*, near Blue Mud Bay.* At *a* is the tiger shark, *Mana*, and at *b* his companion. The wavy lines at their tails symbolize the wake.[42] In the upper and lower panels, the squares[43] on either side of the sharks indicate the fallen leaves of an unidentified palm tree floating on the surface of the water.[44] At certain times of the year the aborigines make a fish trap by blocking the entrance of a watercourse leading into the swamp with these leaves, and driving the fish into it.

Turtles and Fish

Plate 119C depicts the ocean.[45] The upper and lower left-hand panels *a* and *b* show two *dua* green turtles, *garinu*, in the rough water indicated by the groups of curving lines. On the lower right at *c* are two seagulls, *nurula*, in flight, two dolphins, *injapana*, and two conch-shells. The cross-hatched object on the left of this panel is a trepang. Above this group at *d* is an attempt to depict a water-spout, *bojunga*. These are not uncommon in the Gulf of Carpentaria during the monsoon season. On the upper right at *e* are two fish, and two turtles eating sea-urchins. The groups of curving lines indicate rough water.

40. Engraved pipe, Fig. 60D.
41. See bark painting of *Borolo-borolo*, Pl. 110A.
* Reproduced in *Australia: Aboriginal Paintings—Arnhem Land*, 1954, Pl. XVIII.
42. This symbol is often used in the art of north-eastern Arnhem Land, e.g. Pl. 115C.
43. These symbols are used on carved figure of the shark, *mana*, Pl. 132A, B, C.
44. The *mata* design of the *dua djapu* language group, of Blue Mud Bay, Fig. 61A.
45. Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

carried out locally and under close control, so that the "grass burn" season conducted by each horde, or hunting group, is prolonged sufficiently to yield its full food potential over a period of weeks or months, without waste.

By the time the burning of the grass has been completed, another phase in the cycle is reached. The group may now follow the watercourses, which are gradually drying up, and employ the special fishing methods which tradition (backed by a long period of trial and error) has established, as being appropriate to the area and to the season. They secure fish, freshwater tortoises and snakes, by swimming "drives" and by the use of dams, weirs, traps, nets, and special poisons containing chiefly *rotenone, saponin* and *tephrosin,* which, as the volume of water becomes restricted, can now be used effectively to stupefy the fish. One of the most effective of the fish poisons used by these people is *moiyoŋo* (*Tephrosia leptoclada*)* a leguminous plant with a root shaped like a small parsnip. This plant, of which specimens were examined at Rothamstead Experimental Station (Herts. England) was found to be highly toxic in solutions of 1%. Later again, the groups which have been hunting independently during the early south-east season, will converge on the few deep permanent lagoons, where the camps increase in size as they are augmented by other groups of people who have been similarly engaged in nomadic hunting.

At this time the chief food of the natives inland will be *ŋätu,* the fruit of the Cycad Palm (*Cycas media*), which in this area yields very large quantities of food. In coastal

*A second species of *Tephrosia* hitherto undescribed, also called *moiyoŋo,* collected during the expeditions in Arnhem Land on which this work was carried out, has since been named *T. Arnhemia* by Mr. C. T. White (Government Botanist, Queensland).

ceremonial exchange system. Besides weapons and fishing lines, the heavier types of rope as well as most of the larger fishing nets, are made by men. In the coastal groups where bark canoes are used, the making of these craft is also the work of the men. In the case of dugout canoes, a man either makes his own canoe, a long and laborious task taking weeks or months of time and requiring a good deal of intensive hard work, or he employs a craftsman to make it for him, in which case he assumes the responsibility for the organisation of the work and for the payments involved. The large, coarsely woven fish traps, which may be five or six feet, or even more, in length, as well as other paraphernalia associated with fishing, are usually made by the men, although women may also assist.

How subtle may be the driving force which induces the natives to work, is shown by the following example. During the south-east or dry season the people rarely build houses, but are content with breakwinds, until the north-west or wet season. Even then they generally delay the work of gathering bark and other necessary building materials until the actual onset of the rains. During a patrol at the beginning of the north-west when we were debating as to whether a heavy storm that threatened was really about to break, one of the natives said "*ŋärru tobitj*",[13] "my muscles have twitched", (and therefore it will not rain). And such is the belief of the natives in these portents that the people would not go out and collect the necessary paperbark to make a proper camp, despite the threatening sky.

[13] Muscular twitching, called *tobitj*, is an omen or portent which is believed to give warning of a forthcoming event, or to foretell the approach of an enemy or a visitor. The part of the body in which the twitching occurs indicates the relationship in which the visitor stands to the person who receives the warning.

Late in the afternoon, generally about sundown, the people will be seen returning to camp from the day's foraging, the women carrying baskets of food on their heads, rolls of teatree bark (*Melaleuca*) for sleeping mats or for use in cooking, and great loads of firewood. On arriving in camp they light the cooking fires and perhaps make another journey for firewood to carry them through the night, and to bring water from a nearby well or lagoon. If the food to be prepared is of a type which requires much washing during the preparation they may take it close to water to prepare, bringing it back to camp to cook.

Although men do gather some vegetable food, and women also capture small game, besides shellfish, the division of labour is sharply defined and at once evident. The woman is primarily the provider of vegetable food, collectively, *ŋäta*, the getter of wood and water, the maker of light baskets and the smaller and more finely made nets. The man is the hunter, the provider of animal food, and is responsible for the conduct of large scale drives for fish and game. The making of weapons, heavy implements, canoes, canoe paddles, heavy fish traps and baskets of coarse heavy fibre, called *koiyapoi*[16] (fish-for) or *ŋätapoi' larr*, (*ŋätapoi*, food-for; *larr*, open or coarse in texture), for the carrying of heavy loads of fish and vegetable food, is also the responsibility of men.

The first impression that any stranger must receive in a fully organised group in Eastern Arnhem Land is of industry. He cannot fail to see that everybody, man or woman, works hard, and that the work is well organised and runs smoothly. And he must also be impressed by the fact that with the exception of very young children who engage earnestly in play, much of which is imitative and

[16] *-poi*, suffix "for".

based on the activities of adults, there is no idleness.